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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
<i>The Core of Religion—The Editor</i> - - - - -	449
<i>C. D. Broad—G. H. Taylor</i> - - - - -	450
<i>A Medley of Ideas—Joseph Bryce</i> - - - - -	451
<i>The Romance of an Asian Isle—T. F. Palmer</i> - - - - -	452
<i>Progress Reported—Bayard Simmons</i> - - - - -	454
<i>The "Third" Alternative—H. Culner</i> - - - - -	455
<i>The Primrose Path—Mimnermus</i> - - - - -	459
<i>"The Dean at His Best"—A. Yates</i> - - - - -	460

*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

Views and Opinions

The Core of Religion

I BEGIN these notes with what will probably strike some readers as being a mere trade puff. But I need hardly assure those who know me that this is not the case. A book is the topic of what I have to say, and I want all who can to read it. Moreover it is on sale by the Pioneer Press—for which my ill-fortune has made me responsible—and that adds to the suspicion. It happens thuswise. The Pioneer Press has secured the whole of the remainder of a rather important book which I read when it was first issued (1930), enjoyed then, and have run through again with strengthened admiration. For it deals with an aspect of the conflict between religion and Freethought with which I have always been interested, and which I believe to be very important indeed.

Some thirty years ago I wrote a series of articles which were afterwards elaborated and published in a book of some three hundred pages under the title of *Religion and Sex*. That book did not bother very much about proving religious beliefs to be unwarrantable; that was taken for granted. It dealt not so much with the origin of religion as the persistence of religion. The origin of religion in fear and ignorance is really a very old thesis. It is at least as old as Ancient Greece, and has been stated over and over again by philosophers. Even the gentle-natured Spinoza said quite bluntly that "God" was the asylum of ignorance. And the proof of this is stated in every book on modern anthropology that touches on the beginnings of religion. It is not a question of opinion, but one of solid, provable fact. Every scientific student knows that had our primitive ancestors known as much of nature as we know, or, if our earliest ancestors had understood the world in which they found themselves, instead of having everything to learn, and the only way of learning being that of trial and error, thinking blunders and only slowly acquiring truth, then, gods, angels, devils, heaven and hell, ghosts and spirits, all the paraphernalia of that inherited ignorance which faces us in the religions of the world would never have existed. When divested

of all trimmings religion stands as the creation of primitive ignorance.

* * *

Ancient and Modern

But the theme of my book ran along other lines. It did not discuss whether religion was true, but why it had persisted. After all, primitive conditions have ceased to exist in many parts of the world. Why did these religious ideas and beliefs not die out with the conditions that gave these mistaken ideas birth? The answer to this problem is to be found in the fact that there has always been a great mass of what religious folk took to be evidence of the existence of the supernatural. The attention of critics has been fixed too much on misunderstandings concerning the physical aspects of nature, and it is only yesterday that the world in general has been in possession of the knowledge that could have ruled out the religious interpretation of human experience. And even now there are multitudes of men and women who believe they are receiving day after day evidence of the truth of the religious interpretation of life. Science has removed the supernatural from the sciences of astronomy, geology, and from other branches of the physical world, but there were other misunderstandings of nature—those that centred round man himself—and it was in those directions that people continued to find support for those primitive ideas which lie at the core of all religions. The attack on religion from the side of physics has been devastating; the attack from the psychological side commenced only yesterday.

Ultimately we may say that religion rests upon the soul-theory, upon the belief that besides the things we know there is in everything at least the possibility of the existence of something that is living. The general term for this belief is Animism, and the founder of modern anthropology, E. B. Tylor, said with profound truth that the great and fundamental division of human thought was that of Animism and Materialism. But Animism is first in the field, and chief in the perpetual support given to religious beliefs is the continuous misinterpretation of constantly recurring normal, abnormal, and pathological mental states. Consider how much of the Christian religion has been built upon the visions of saints, visions that have been brought about by the practice of fasting, the religious torture of the sexual nature of man and woman, the unhealthy habits of solitary meditation, and so forth. It is only yesterday that people accepted, not as a mere tradition but as a provable fact, insanity and other mental ills as evidence of "possession," and the possibility of old women conjuring up storms, or ruining the crops, by magic. And we still have flourishing the belief in faith-healing as a product of the power of God; we have still such semi-erotic movements as the Oxford Group racket. There is still the belief that you may communicate with the dead by sitting round a table and persuading

yourself that some poor subject of schizophrenia is the vehicle for messages from the spirit world. There is an absolute continuity of this kind of "evidence" from the most primitive times down to the Roman Catholic exorcism of someone possessed, of the treasuring of a mascot or the bone of a saint, or a week of prayer to secure peace. It is in the perpetuation of these frames of mind that religion has found the opportunity for survival.

* * * .

Physician or Parson?

Now the book I began by talking about is a very elaborate study of this soul-theory, carried out along special lines. Its full title is *Possession Among Primitive Races in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and Modern Times*, its author is Professor Oesterreich of Tübingen University. It is only one phase of the belief in the supernatural, but it is a most important one, and for nearly fifty years had been made the subject of careful examination by skilled observers in many parts of the world. If one takes these modern cases and places them side by side with the relevant instances in the Bible, and particularly in the New Testament, there is no mistaking their relationship. Professor Oesterreich's method is devastating in its clarity and pertinence. He takes the primitive world and shows the universality of this theory of possession. He goes through the New Testament with its example of possession. He traces the various epidemics that occur from time to time, as late as our own day, and he shows that we have a series of phenomena, which instead of being religious in nature is no more than a matter of abnormal psychology, and falls within the province of the physician, and not that of the minister of religion. There is also a number of cases of Spiritualism, including some very acute comments on the famous Mrs. Piper, who has been so triumphantly brought forward by those rabid advocates of the primitive-modern spiritualists. *Possession* is a case book which every Freethinker ought to have at his elbow, for it deals with phenomena which can be seen around us, and not studied as something that belonged to past ages. Professor Oesterreich's conclusion is:—

The dominant conception of the present time is that no psychic life supervenes and that no spirit, either pure or possessed only of an etheric body exists in this world. This idea, which has become one of the most firmly established constituents of our present-day outlook on life is completely new as measured by the standard of history. It is another example of the Age of Enlightenment, the importance of which has been so profoundly underestimated, and which contains the roots of nearly every fundamental conception of our modern scientific thought. It may be said without exaggeration that the whole of the preceding centuries theoretically regarded the air as filled with demons, peopled with spirits of all sorts. The extent to which possession contributed to produce that belief in a spirit-world resuscitates wherever kindred states are manifested; observers without a thorough preliminary knowledge of psychology are absolutely convinced they are in the presence of a "spirit."

Those who have any comprehension of modern psychology and its proper applications will agree with this, as they will with the remarks concerning modern Spiritualism. The explanation of fraud does not fit the facts, even though it may explain and expose tricksters.

But the main value of Professor Oesterreich's book is the light it throws on the history of religion, and on the history of the Christian religion in particular; for in its hey-day no religion ever laboured harder to create morbid mental states, to torture the body in order to produce "spiritual visions," and then to

parade the product as evidence of the existence of a spiritual world.

I once gave annoyance to the late G. K. Chesterton by asking what plain distinction could be drawn between a "spiritual" vision and a "spirituous" one. He thought I was flippant when I was putting a straightforward scientific question. When the Church doomed healthy women to perpetual virginity, and monks to perpetual celibacy, did it need much scientific insight to explain why the nuns had visions of the young man Jesus, while the monks as regularly had visions of the Virgin Mary? Did it want much scientific insight to see the cause of the spiritual exaltation of saints in the torture they were inflicting on their bodies and minds by their religious practices? With a knowledge of the phenomena of split-personalities and of the automatism of which the human organism is capable, does it need the clumsy hypothesis of fraud to explain the phenomena of Spiritualism? I think the man or woman who thoroughly digests this voluminous work on *Possession* will find himself on the path that ultimately will lead him to a complete understanding of religion. He will realize that there are not many religions in the world, there is, in truth, only one with various forms. Whether we are religious or non-religious, Atheist or Theist, we are all living in the same world, subject to the same reactions, coming into the world and getting out of it in the same manner. Our differences are ultimately a difference of interpretation. And the distinction is that the interpretation which we know as religion is the one created by the primitive savage; that offered by scientific Freethought is one that has been built up by the growth of human knowledge, and which is able to take the religions of the world, primitive and modern, and explain them out of existence.

CHAPMAN COHEN

C. D. Broad

THE comments of Professor C. D. Broad on the Christian religion, noted in the *Freethinker*, a few weeks ago, are the most outspoken I have seen from him. Actually there are many whose writings contain an implicit or explicit rejection of theism, and therefore of Christianity, but who seldom go out of their way to make clear the anti-Christian implications of their attitude. The frank declarations of this Cambridge professor of philosophy are therefore of value and it may not be untimely to add a note as to the general trend of his thought.

He has been prolific with articles and critical papers, but his views may reliably be consulted in *The Mind and its Place in Nature*. His penchant for searching criticism is in evidence in his *Examination of MacTaggart's Philosophy* (a prior reading of *MacTaggart's Nature of Existence* is advisable), and there is also a useful booklet, *Determinism, Indeterminism and Libertarianism*.

With the Cambridge Realism of the present century, which has been particularly pregnant in regard to subsequent American philosophy, three names are associated; Bertrand Russell, George H. Moore and Charles Dunbar Broad, who has been termed the "bath-chair philosopher."

Broad writes with extreme caution, severely avoiding extravagant speculation. And when such speculation is indulged in by others, Broad sets out to untie the knots in the most painstaking manner possible, such as in his careful unravelling of MacTaggart's wild schemes. MacTaggart, too, was an Atheist (but something of a mystic).

You will not, then, expect from Broad an easy, lively or fiery style (unless, perchance, you see fire in logic). He chooses each statement carefully and occasionally makes one wonder whether he is writing a book or doing a sum. The following, for instance, is his definition of determinism, as near as I can give it from memory: If a substance S is in a state s at time t and in a position p with regard to another substance A, then the previous history of events is such that the existence of S in a state other than s at t (etc., etc.), or in a position other than P (etc., etc.) would be impossible.

Broad sets down seventeen conceivable philosophies (Pure Mechanism, Emergent Neutralism, Emergent Mentalism, etc.), and by elimination comes to rest in Emergent Materialism as the most acceptable. The term "emergent," he contends, becomes necessary because the world has not that homogeneity which would have to be posited by what he terms Pure Mechanism, with only one kind of change (i.e., positional). Even chemical changes lift the natural processes from mere plus or minus effects and enfranchise the term "emergence," as of distinct from mere resultants.

Broad maintains a use for "substance," in which some Freethinkers may see the "ghost of a God." We are to seek the self-existent substance by scientific analysis. A society of minds, he says, is thus less substantial than one of its constituents, and so down to the stage of electrons, "genuine natural units" which may "claim a high degree of substantiality." He sought to dispose of MacTaggart's claim that the fundamental subsistents are selves. Even in introspection he failed to see the MacTaggart "Pure Ego," which is never the whole of what we introspect and not even part. "What we introspect are mental events," from which mind is a derivative. It is, he holds, dependent for its existence "on the functioning organism, and there is nothing to suggest any theory such as would give to mind a more important or self-subsistent status."

The view that only matter exists is put into the mouth of the materialist by such opponents as A. F. Taylor (the materialist "is bound to hold that mind or nervous system is, like everything else, a body"), J. A. Thomson ("The materialistic outlook sees only electrons and protons. It leaves mind out of account, regarding it as an illusion produced by living matter"), Canon Streeter (It is "the view that only matter exists"), W. C. D. Dampier Whetham ("Dead matter in hard unyielding lumps is the sole ultimate reality") as well as works of lesser repute like Durant's *Story of Philosophy* (the materialist believes "matter is the sole reality.")

It is well to note, then, that Broad disavows any such belief. Materiality, he says, is a differentiating attribute in the sense that there are some things that have all the factors of materiality and are not emergent or reducible. I take him to imply that though some other existents merit the adjectives living and mental, yet they are reducible by analysis until we are left with only the attribute of materiality. It was the position of Dühring, who spoke of nature as a totality of existences which empty backward into a primordial state.

He emphasizes that there is no possible connexion between materialism and pessimism. As regards purpose, it has not been implanted from some extraneous natural source, but has evolved. Organisms are "teleological systems which have arisen without design." As for a God, he does not see "any good

reason to believe in such a Being." When a religionist, Tennant, compared belief in God with belief in others (*Philosophical Theology*) the reply was that the one was a given existent, and that the belief worked.

When A. F. Taylor (*The Faith of a Moralist*) argued that man gets the stimulus to morality from a higher Being, since it was impossible to get it from himself, Broad objected that the power comes from man himself in the way that the energies of a whole stream can be used to raise part of it to a level higher than the source. And though he has not, I think, actually described himself as an Atheist, it may be safely said that he is without belief in a God.

G. H. TAYLOR

A Medley of Ideas

I HAVE just been reading a series of addresses by a well-known Nonconformist layman in the North of England, delivered before various gatherings, religious and social, which some how reminded me of "the pretty little patchwork quilt that grandma made." The nine addresses are published in book form, but throughout the whole there is emphasized the same point of view—that this crazy world, with its wars, its industrial disputes, its religious conflicts, its poverty and its crime, can only be wrought into a peaceful harmonious whole by using the religious thread of heavenly manufacture. Of course, every religious apologist makes the same claim, and it would not be worth noticing but for its strange and often contradictory admissions.

The first of these addresses is entitled, *The Sense of Stewardship*, dealing with the Christian doctrine of the right use of wealth, which the author claims to be the "core" of Christ's message. Taking his audience into his confidence he told them that he estimated he had listened during his lifetime to some 4,000 sermons, and in 25 years he had never once heard the "core" of Christ's message alluded to. Whether this neglect of the Master's message was due to the vagueness of its original delivery, or to the inability of his numberless present-day expositors to appreciate it, he does not say; but they would appear to have made a serious mess of things. "By far the largest number of these sermons dealt with some form of theological problems, but their application to the difficulties of everyday life was negligible, while many were futile and useless!" Referring again to the futility of theological discourses he said it would be better if their ministers said candidly: "I don't know." But, if all the men of God were to follow this advice and line up on the side of truth, they would very soon, like a certain historic character, find their occupation gone.

Notwithstanding such a confession of the negligible results of the social and pulpit efforts of the ministry, our friend's mind is still obsessed by some fancied superiority of their calling. He says:—

Of the three greatest professions—that of a doctor, a schoolmaster, and a parson—the ministry is certainly the greatest.

This claim he bases on their "having set aside all worldly ambition, and chosen deliberately a path of self-abnegation and self-surrender." The story is told of an old Scotch woman who was certainly wiser as to their aims and pretensions. When the minister called to tell her that he had "gotten a call from the Lord"; "Yes," she said, "but if it hadn't been a bigger stipend, you'd neer a' heard Him," Joseph McCabe, who was himself a priest, speaks of their

¹ *Contemporary British Philosophy.*

² *What is Man.*

³ *Reality.*

⁴ *A History of Science.*

whole aim as being "wealth and power." In the early centuries of Christianity legacy-hunting by the men of God became so rife that it had to be suppressed. But with the growing secular power of the Church it was soon revived, and it is as rampant today as it ever was. Herr Hitler, in a speech some little time ago, rebutting the charge of irreligion that had been brought against him, stated that next to the State, the Church was still the wealthiest landowner and the largest property owner in Germany. And a Catholic paper recently, in answer to a question, had to admit that as late as two centuries ago, the Church owned half the land in Spain—as it did in England in the time of Henry the Eighth. I have in mind a shining light of the City Temple who would not come out of London to preach an anniversary service to help a poor congregation, under £40 for a week-end. The same tale of "grab" is not confined to any particular Church, but runs through the whole of Christian history. It makes one wonder how our friend got such a notion into his head as the "self-abnegation and self-surrender of the clergy."

In speaking of the great social experiment of Soviet Russia since the Revolution, in the equalization of wealth and the abolition of poverty, our friend says, "that these are *our* problems, and that they can only be solved through the outlook of the Christian Church." Since when these have become Christian problems, he does not say; but for many long centuries the great problem for the Christian was how to save his soul from hell, and how effectively to plant his heel on the head of the never-dying worm. Assuming the rôle of Economist, and proposing a cure for unemployment, he says:—

Russia has adopted this same method, with far smaller capital resources, and with only a materialistic ideal to inspire her, and in so doing has already become the second largest productive country in the world.

Which amounts to saying that the first great social experiment on national lines was made by Soviet Russia, without any aid or encouragement from Religion, and on a purely Atheistic basis. Religious apologists now seem to be tumbling over each other to compliment Russia on her great achievement. Speaking before a Trade-Union Conference, a few days ago, the Rev. G. W. Parkinson, a Stockton minister, said:—

Russia was the one truly religious nation in the world to-day. It was not that they had dethroned God, but that they had dethroned Mammon. Although the leaders denied God it did not matter—it was not what a man said that mattered, but what he did. Marriage in the Soviet Union, with all that it meant and implied, had certainly been purified from much of the economic bondage which it held in capitalistic countries, while in Russia there was no racial persecution.

This, to many, will be a new view of Christian ethics.

Our friend claims that, "All good character is based on Religion"; and says that, "He never ceases to wonder how men who have not this Christian faith in their souls are able to find their way through life at all." Then he makes this strange admission.—

It is a matter of common knowledge that a cultured Chinaman is one of the greatest natural gentlemen that the world knows.

It is also common knowledge that the admitted excellent virtues of the cultured Chinaman have been attained without the aid of any supernatural religion whatever. The Rev. Mr. Smith, who was forty years a missionary in China, says that it is almost a hopeless task to get the notion of a God into a Chinaman's

head. The reason is this. There is no word in the Chinese language by which such an idea of a Supreme Being could be translated. The early Jesuits in China came up against this difficulty when they attempted to translate the Christian Scriptures into Chinese. It is the Abbe Huc, I think, who relates this incident in his *Travels*; and it is also referred to by Mrs Bradlaugh Bonner in her book on *Missions*. Whether they ever had a religion seems doubtful; but certainly since the time of Confucius, in the sixth century, B.C., their civilization has been founded on the sane and wise philosophy of their great ethical teacher.

If our friend never ceases to wonder how those who have not the Christian faith in their souls ever get through life at all, it can only be because he has never made himself acquainted with the many facts of world-history that would have disabused his mind of any such arbitrary notion. Besides the Chinese, there are several hundred million Buddhists in such countries as Ceylon, Burma, Siam, and in the Far East, whose life and happiness are sustained by the noble thoughts and lofty aspirations of one of the world's greatest minds, which totally ignore the idea of a God.

These extracts from *The Faith of a Business Man*, serve to show the number of chaotic ideas that are floating about in the Christian world of to-day.

JOSEPH BRYCE

The Romance of an Asian Isle

WHEN the sea-encircled territory of Australia is classified as a continent, Borneo becomes secondary only in size to New Guinea among the islands of our globe. Situated in a central position among many adjacent islands, including Java, Celebes, Sumatra and the Philippines, Borneo is protected from the destructive typhoons which rage in adjoining areas. Politically, this island is arranged in four regions. The northern section comprises British North Borneo, Sarawak occupies the north-west, while lying between them is the Sultanate of Brunei, now a British Protectorate. The remainder of Borneo, which has more than double the area controlled by Britain, is a Dutch dominion. In 1927 the population was estimated at three millions, the Chinese numbering 250,000, and Europeans 5,000 only.

After Magellan's untimely death, two vessels of his squadron sailed to Brunei in 1521. The Malays were already there; their civilization was well-advanced, and trading and cultural intercourse with China was fairly extensive. The Portuguese established commercial centres in the coasts, but no conquest was attempted. Holland and England then entered into competition, and the Dutch ultimately annexed the lion's share of the spoil. At an earlier period Hindu influences had been widespread in Borneo, as the numerous ruins of Indian temples plainly prove. But it was with the Malay invasion and coastal settlements that the aboriginal tribes were driven into the interior where they still reside.

Borneo has been an island from Eocene times, but in the pre-Tertiary Period it was apparently broken up into many separate islands, and has assumed its present continuity with the retreat of the waves. Its coal deposits are all recent and inferior in quality. Dr. Posewitz, in his geological survey of Borneo, surmises that some millions of years since: "wide arms of the sea ran far into the interior. In the beginning of the Diluvial period these gulfs began slowly to give place to dry land; a strip of flat land was formed along the foot of the mountains, and gold, dia-

monds and platinum swept down by running water were here deposited. The seas became shallower and retreated, and the present period commenced."

The coal seams of Britain and other lands were formed in remote ages, but those of Borneo are very instructive in affording obvious evidence of their vegetable origin. So numerous are the beds of this recently deposited mineral that they reach the river banks themselves. In his Geological Report of Borneo and the neighbouring island of Labuan, Motley informs us that: "The coal, dense and perfectly carbonized as it is, yet exhibits most unequivocally its vegetable character; and not only that, but even the kind of vegetation of which it is composed is evident from the most cursory inspection. . . . All the specimens I have examined have exactly the structure of the trees now forming the bulk of the timber growing above them. The trees must have been of vast dimensions. I traced one trunk upwards of 60 feet, and for the whole of that distance it was not less than 8 feet wide. Impressions of leaves are in vast abundance. Besides these are two or three species of ferns, a large flag shaped leaf like a crinum and four or five species of palms."

Borneo has a lavish supply of streams, many of which are considerable rivers, but inward navigation is restricted by rapids and waterfalls. The flora of the country is very luxuriant and the scenery superb. The monarch of the forest—the *Tapang*—soars to an enormous height on a single stem crowned by a magnificent dome of foliage. Plant life is predominantly Malayan, while on the lofty summit of Kinabalu there flourishes a curious medley of Australian, Malayan and Indian flora. Immense rhododendrons, the pitcher plants (*Nepenthes*) and other species attain a variety, size and beauty scarcely credible, the orchids also adding splendour to the scene.

Here also is the habitat of the orang-utan, the "jungle man" of the Malays, a near relative of humankind; as well as that of the gibbon, an anthropoid ape even more manlike in aspect and habits than the orang-utan. The most remarkable of the numerous species of Bornean monkeys is the proboscis primate, so distinguished by its prominent, fleshy nasal organ. The tiger so common in Java and Sumatra is absent, although there are two smaller representatives of the feline order. The range of the Bornean elephant is limited, as is also that of the rhinoceros. Bird-life is akin to that of the adjoining islands and peninsula. Reptiles abound and two ferocious species of crocodiles are elsewhere unknown. These predaceous reptiles are greatly dreaded by the natives and their toll of human life is very considerable.

Central Borneo is the home of the Dyaks, while the prosperous Moslem Malays reside on the coasts and the mouths of rivers. The Bugis, a trading community, dwell on the southern and eastern shores. But the most interesting stock is the Dyak, divided into various tribes speaking diverse languages and, where they have evaded European influence, still prone to inter-tribal conflict. Most of these natives are Pagans, but where Malay intercourse has existed many Dyaks have adopted the Moslem faith.

These Dyaks have been held up to execration as inveterate head-hunters, although they possess many amiable qualities. Formerly, states Dr. Keane: "A young Dyak could not marry, nor a parent leave off mourning, till a head was obtained." This custom, so eminently religious in character is rapidly disappearing. Sir Hugh Clifford, who testifies from personal experience of the native observances and beliefs, tells us that: "In Borneo, as elsewhere, the progressive stages of religion range through Animism, through Polytheism to Monotheism. These forms of belief are found not only spread throughout the

island, but commonly combined in one tribe and one individual. The belief in spiritual powers is universal, such powers being either (a) Anthropomorphic gods, or (b) vague impalpable native spirits, for which the generic name in Kayan is *Toh*, possibly a corruption of the Malay word *Hantu*, ghost." The slaves at one time sacrificed to accompany the chiefs to the abodes of bliss have apparently been substituted by the skulls of enemies. These crania are regarded as the dwelling places of their ghosts or *Toh*; are treasured as repositories of potent influences and are approached with feelings of awe. The veneration accorded *Toh* seems associated with the belief that the spirit resident in the human head may be propitiated into providing bounteous harvests and the prosperity of the tribe, and especially that of the native who secured the trophy. But when neglected the ghost betrays its resentment by throwing the skull to the ground.

Among the Kayans and most other tribes the period of mourning for a dead chief ended with the taking of a head. But now it appears, that a desiccated skull "is often borrowed from a friendly village, both for this purpose and for the harvest festival, and the fertility of the crops. At certain stations the Government keeps a few old heads that can be borrowed."

For some reason or other, the Kayans dislike the presence of more than a score or so of skulls, in a dwelling, and when they depart to another domicile some of the heads are carried to a newly constructed hut, where a fire is kindled to hoodwink the spirits into the belief that their new habitation is in human occupation, and there they are abandoned.

British North Borneo has many interesting features, while the realm of the Sultans of Brunei is remarkable for its capital city, which is, indeed, the Venice of the East. The city itself has remained little changed for centuries. Drs. Guillemard and Keane thus describe it. Brunei's "vast collection of houses is built on piles in the water. Scarcely an inch of ground is to be seen anywhere, and many of the houses are built in deep water. The market is probably one of the most extraordinary sights the East has to show. Each stall is a canoe, and it would puzzle a spectator to form any estimate of their number, for the water is covered with craft of all sizes in incessant motion. . . . Several other towns in the Malay Archipelago resemble Brunei in being almost entirely aquatic."

The coastal district known as Sarawak has a romantic past. It is probably unique in its colonial character, for here the humanitarian Englishman, James Brooke, by purely peaceful means established concord and good will in a territory previously distracted by bloody strife. Ruling as Rajah over a previously antagonistic population of Dyaks and Malays, with the cordial assent of both, under Sir James Brooke's sway slavery was abolished, a code of laws devised, industry and commerce increased and murder and piracy suppressed. The famous naturalist, Dr. A. R. Wallace, speaking from personal observation, pays a high tribute to the Rajah's administration. "It is a unique case in the history of the world," he writes, "for a private English gentleman to rule over two conflicting races . . . with their own consent without any means of coercion, but depending upon them both for protection and support, while at the same time he introduces some of the best customs of civilization and checks all crimes and barbarous practices that previously prevailed. Under his government 'running-a-muck,' so frequent in other Malay countries, has never taken place, and in a population of about 30,000 Malays, almost all of whom carry their *kris*, and were accustomed to avenge an insult with a stab, murders only occur once in several years."

The Rajah learnt the Malay language, which he spoke fluently, and he always adopted a dignified and conciliatory manner in his intercourse with the natives. Early conspiracies were completely overcome by tact and courage. Brooke treated the Moslem faith with marked respect and even employed the sacred precepts of the Koran as the basis of his legal reforms. Catholic and Protestant missions now operate, but very few conversions seem to have been made among the Dyaks or Chinese. Dr. Keane notes that: "No work is attempted among those of Mohammedan faith. It is not considered advisable by the authorities, and if undertaken would be almost certain to result in failure."

The Chinese insurrection which occurred during Brooke's early rule was accompanied by arson and murder, and the Rajah's courage alone preserved his life. But the entire native population rallied to the Government's assistance, expelled and nearly exterminated the rebels and bore Brooke back in triumph. The unswerving loyalty displayed to their white ruler by two previously antagonistic races—Malay and Dyak—speaks volumes. Well may Guillemard urge that the remarkable achievement of Sir Charles Brooke and his successors proves that the progress of semi-civilized peoples "requires no peculiar legal or diplomatic or legislative training, but chiefly patience and good feeling and the absence of prejudice. The great thing is to avoid over-legislation . . . to make the people happy and contented in their own way, even if that way should be quite opposed to European theories." Sarawak should serve as a model to all modern colonial States, and even to those who clamour for colonies.

T. F. PALMER

Progress Reported

WHO is it who buys Reports of international congresses? It is obvious that those who have attended and, perhaps, played some part in a conference may desire to possess a souvenir of a memorable, or at least a pleasant, occasion. But who else is a prospective purchaser, and why? These thoughts are prompted by the Report* of the London Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers, which has just been published. The question is of some interest and, of course, it carries the mind back to the origin of the Reports, namely, the Congresses themselves. This opens up the much larger question: why do people attend international conferences?

A regard for truth compels the admission that there is a good deal of flapdoodle at many of these conferences. If, too, they have their bright and inspiring moments they also have their *longueurs*, dull periods of translation into unknown tongues, from which all but the orator and conference officials are fain to escape into the lobbies for a smoke and a chat. We mean no disrespect to our good comrade, the eminent speaker; we are but human, and he, too, may soon have his turn for flight. There is, moreover, much waste of time over trivialities. In this connexion I recall painfully my first international conference. This was at Copenhagen nearly thirty years ago, when I sat at the elbow of Comrade Ramsay MacDonald. For two whole days the British delegation wrangled over the question whether Comrade Vandervelde had used the words *plus ou moins* or *de plus en plus*—

"more or less" or "more and more." Such misunderstandings are doubtless inevitable in international gatherings, and they should be treated as such. Doubtless also (I cannot now remember) the whole matter was straightened out in the Report, but much valuable time—and some temper—was squandered. Well, this, at any rate, is a case where the printed record of a conference speech can come in useful.

I have dwelt first on the debit side of international congresses for they are not generally admitted. The credit side naturally far outweighs these debits, or, of course, these popular gatherings would not be held. There is no need for me to enumerate here the manifest advantages of such congresses, specially to those who attend them. To me their greatest value lies in the fact that they overcome for a while the intense loneliness that the reformer must feel ever and again. The herd-instinct is strong in us all, and though Ibsen sounds the heroic note when he says, "the strongest man is he who stands most alone," even the strongest may yearn at times for the friendly greetings of those who think as he. Therefore those British Freethinkers who attended the London Conference will assuredly treasure this handsome souvenir of those friendly (and anxious) days in September last; days when we extended the right hand of fellowship to the select company of *esprits* from beyond the seas who knew our difficulties and shared our hopes.

For British Freethinkers the London Conference last year will be memorable for two reasons. First, that the International Conference was again being held in this country after the lapse of some decades, and, secondly, owing to the fact that it met under the shadow of impending war. The fact that the war did not then materialize, but within a fortnight of the Congress was (at a shameful cost!) postponed for several months was a fact not known to the delegates: the threat of war was an overhanging reality. It is interesting to read again the speeches at the various functions of the Congress, and note how heavily this threat weighed on the minds of the speakers. Those who were present at Conway Hall and other Congress assemblies, will bear me out that the general feeling was that when the Conference broke up we might not see each other again for years. Perhaps even now . . . *Absit omen!*

Besides this ever-present threat of war there was another threat. This threat, which also fortunately did not materialize in actual breaches of the peace, was from the Christian Churches, and, in particular, the Roman Catholics. This Mr. Chapman Cohen has rightly and ably dealt with in his twelve-page introduction to this Report. I say "rightly" because as Mr. Cohen points out, it "for many reasons, therefore, is desirable that a statement of so remarkable an outburst of bigotry and slander should be placed on record." This section alone would make the possession of this Report desirable to the student of the British Freethought movement. Among the main misrepresentations of the Congress in Christian circles were (1) that it had come to London as a last resource after having been refused admission to several countries, (2) that the Congress was held at the command of Moscow, (3) that it was subsidized by Moscow, (4) that the Conference Agenda was drawn up by Ditto. This being so, it is not surprising to learn that (5) The World Union was a mere cover for a political organization, the Proletarian Freethought movement, and, consequently, (6) a cover for a Communist campaign in this country. All these lies are trenchantly dealt with by Mr. Cohen in this Introduction, which deserves the widest circulation. As one who was present at the Congress gathering at Charles Bradlaugh's tomb, just after it had been vilely

* World Union of Freethinkers. Report of the International Congress, September 9-13, 1938, London. C. A. Watts & Co., Ltd., and the Pioneer Press (G. W. Foote & Co., Ltd.), 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Cloth, 2s. 6d. net (post 2s. 9d.); Paper cover, 1s. net (post 1s. 2d.).

desecrated, I am especially glad that the details of this obscene outrage should have been recorded by Mr. Cohen, although as an Englishman I cannot but feel deep shame that this outrage should have been perpetrated under the eyes, as it were, of our foreign comrades. Among the excellent photographs with which the Report is adorned is one showing the Bradlaugh tomb minus the bust of Bradlaugh, which the miscreants had removed only a few hours previously. Other photographs include a shot of the Congress in session, the platform at the Demonstration at the Scala Theatre, groups of foreign delegates, and a happy snap of our President and Mrs. Cohen greeting one of our Belgian comrades. Very properly the compilers of this excellent Report have featured the photographs of the Czech and Spanish delegates. What trials these friends of ours have gone through since the Congress was held it is not difficult to imagine. We can only hope that this "featuring" of their photographs by their British Freethought comrades will, in happier times, convey to them our appreciative solidarity in and with their struggles. All in all, then, this Report is a most important testimony to the progress and set-backs of the World Freethought movement at a very critical time, and one which every British Freethinker will hope to possess.

BAYARD SIMMONS

Acid Drops

A correspondent of the *News-Chronicle* writes that on the notice-board of H.M.S. Resolution there is a notice to the crew headed "Communist Propaganda" warning the crew that they may receive propaganda literature, and that if they receive it or are offered such literature they are to report at once to their officers. Now if that had been a notice against *all* propagandist literature, we should have taken it as no more than another manifestation of the militaristic mentality which can never appreciate the fact that soldiers and sailors are adult men, and must treat them as though they are mentally incapable of forming their own opinions on topics which every citizen should consider. But it is *Communist* literature that is vetoed. Not Nazi literature, or Italian Fascist literature. There is no warning concerning that although it is largely distributed in this country. Why this selection? Does it help to explain Russia's distrust of our Government, and the delay in concluding a pact with Russia? We wonder whether any member of Parliament would raise the question in the House, and damn party orders. No soldier or sailor should be asked to sell his right to read whatever he pleases, or to give to a companion whatever he pleases, merely because he is in the army or navy.

We also observe this tenderness towards the feelings of Fascists displayed by that ridiculous person—ridiculous more in the discharge of his function than in himself—the censor of films, with regard to the film "Professor Mamlock." The film depicts the story of a Jewish doctor who is hounded down by the Nazis, robbed of his position, and is finally called back to attend to a prominent Fascist. The censor declines to pass the film, made in Russia, because he says the picture is a work of imagination on a provocative theme, whereas the "Confessions of a Nazi Spy," was based on actual records. But that film was made in America, and while in present circumstances British officials would find it unwise to affront the Americans by suppressing a film which had so triumphant a reception in the United States, it is another thing to annoy Hitler by permitting "Professor Mamlock" to appear.

The plea that one is based on records and the other a work of imagination is a deliberate subterfuge, and an obvious falsehood. Could any film depicting the ill-treatment of Jewish doctors by the gangsters outstrip in imagination the fact of the treatment of Jewish doctors and others in Ger-

many? If the actual facts were put upon the screen there would be such a howl of execration throughout this country that even the prince of appeasers would be unable to play fast and loose with a position in which European civilization is in question. The London County Council has, at the time of writing, the matter in hand, and it is to be hoped that it will not merely sanction the appearance of the film, but advise its exhibition. After our Government being kicked so often by Italy, Germany and Japan, the situation has become one that can best be described in the words of the author of *Hudibras* :—

He had been kicked so often he could tell whether
The boot was made of Cordovan or Russian leather.

We notice, by the way, that although the majority of the people in this country are in favour of the pact with Russia there has been no week of prayer, as there was last September to bring about the desired result. Why is this? Was the answer to the last an "awful warning," or is it considered too much to ask God to help the British people conclude a pact with "godless" Russia? God only knows!

Some weeks ago we pointed out that all the talk of "appeasement," imagining that Germany can live at peace with her neighbours was sheer foolishness, or indicated a total inability to understand the existing situation. We are glad to find Mr. J. B. Priestley emphasizing this point in a special article in the *News-Chronicle* for July 10. Mr. Priestley says, as we did, that no amount of annexed territory can satisfy the German Gangsters. Fascism must make war on its neighbours, whenever it can, as a condition of its own existence. Let it cease conquering, or talk of new conquests, and it will begin to feel pressure without and within. From without because of the inevitable desire of its own people to play the part of men in the society to which it belongs, and from within because of the inevitable influx of ideas from without. And the bigger the boundaries the stronger becomes this factor. So long as it exists Fascism in any country must always use force against either its own people or outsiders; so long must it threaten the peace and the security of others. You cannot live at peace with a gang of criminals except at the price of submitting to constant blackmail. Every free country is a menace to Fascism.

The Secretary of the Protestant Truth Society declared in the *British Weekly*, the other day, that "the twin enemies of Christianity are Atheism and Roman Catholicism." We gently incline to the honour given to Atheism, but really, are we seriously to take for granted that there is any *relevant* difference between the Christianity of the Protestant Truth Society and that of Roman Catholicism? Do they not both believe in an infallible book—the Bible? Are they not entirely at one on the Sonship and Godship of Jesus? Do not both sects believe in Jehovah? Have they both not accepted the day once devoted to the worship of the Sun as their Sabbath? Are they not both convinced that the Jews are quite wrong in not accepting Jesus as their Messiah? We could ask many other questions, but it must be evident to any outsider that there is precious little difference between the beliefs of one Christian sect and another. Besides, is it not a fact that Roman Catholics are just as convinced that the Protestant Truth Society is the real enemy of Christianity?

There has been a devil of a row about a chapter dealing very clearly with the sex-question in a book published by the Student Christian Movement entitled *Education for Christian Marriage*. Canon Kirby, at the Conference of Moral Welfare Workers, the other day, called the chapter "filthy and disgusting." It was "sufficient to horrify any decent Christian man or woman." The Bishop of Kingston-on-Thames admitted it was a "rather frank chapter," while Canon Long claimed it "went beyond the bounds of modesty and decency." Other descriptions called the chapter "disgusting, morally unwholesome, shameless, closely approaching the pornographic." We expect that the real truth is that its writer was only following what can be

read in the multitude of "sex" books which are at the moment enjoying such a remarkable vogue. They all repeat the same thing in varying language, and are eagerly read by all kinds of people. But the more a book is attacked as being "obscene" the more likely is it that it will be bought. And "Christian" people are just as curious as other people.

Another row which has not yet quietened down is that which was caused by the Bishops' Report on Doctrine. A petition was presented signed by 8,200 of the clergy for

a formal declaration that a man who denies any of the historical facts stated in the Creeds is, if he continues to minister, violating the conditions which are incumbent upon such a ministry.

That "formal declaration" has not been forthcoming, but "Cosmo Cantaur" has addressed a long and wordy letter to explain why, to a number of delegates. He admits that a denial of the "historic" facts contained in the Creeds "could not be legitimately made by any priest of the Church in his public teaching," and he feels that a priest who did so should resign. But the Archbishop still considers that "at the present time there is no occasion for any synodical declaration of this kind." The truth is that the Bishops simply dare not stop "freedom of thought" in the Church, though at the same time, they recognize that any priest who undertakes the teaching of the Faith ought to believe "historic facts" which are neither historic nor facts. It is a delightful dilemma, and the *Church Times* says rightly, "No society can entrust its message to men who openly reject its fundamentals." A priest is bound to believe, to believe whole-heartedly, and to question nothing. Otherwise he should get out.

Whatever else Conscriptio might do for the new militiamen there can be no question that they will be well provided for in religion. Every effort will be made to induce conscripts to attend religious services, and to receive religious instruction, while prayer books and New Testaments will be issued to all quite free. Indeed army and navy chaplains are boasting that the men in the services are actually far more religious than civilians. We wonder whether this is true, whether the conscripts love church parade, and whether these parades would be attended if the men were not penalized if they did not attend. The truth may well be that the men are just forced to be religious as they are forced by discipline to obey orders no matter how distasteful.

With the appointment of a Catholic boss at the B.B.C., we see the gradual increase of Catholic influence in various directions. Talks by Catholics, Services in Catholic Churches and so on. Why not? We hope—with small prospect of effect—that the public will in time see the miserable results of permitting ANY religion to use the nation's Radio for sectarian propaganda. Father Martindale is reported in the *Listener* to have begun a series of talks on "Christ and Pleasure." If we may judge by the first instalment, we are in for the most trivial twaddle imaginable. The Jesuit Father's banal reference to "God's good pleasure-giving things" as something desirable, while he still denounces anybody who "sets out after other pleasure" is characteristic of his tribe. Of course Father Martindale is eloquent about joy—"true joy"—although he should know that Pleasure and Joy are synonymous. One may gauge the Holy Father's appreciation of "Joy" when one reads that his idea of joy is something that "shall not be destroyed by whatever crucifixion awaits us"—in other words "Pie (or "joy") in the sky when you die."

We read in a contemporary:—

The Chinese have an absolute conviction that life persists after death. Hence death counts for nothing, and brigands will joke with one another while awaiting their turn to be executed.

We know that when a Christian faces death with equanimity it proves the truth of the Christian religion. When

Samuel Johnson faced death with the reverse of equanimity, it proved, one supposes, the same thing. What it proves in the case of the Chinese brigands is more difficult to answer. If Christianity is true, it is reasonably certain, however, that these misguided fellows had nothing to joke about. It is only the narrow footway that leads to Heaven. The main arterial roads lead to Hell. This is true whether you are a Christian or a Christian of sorts, a rich man or a poor man, a saint or a brigand. Johnson had very good reason to be nervous about his fate—he had read the Blessed Book.

Christians are always extolling the Bible as Literature, and make great play with the expressions of admiration for its contents made by men of eminence whether inside or outside the Christian faith. Christians evidently feel that the Word of God needs all the testimonials it can get. We have had brought to our notice a paragraph from Goethe which runs on the approved lines:

This sacred volume which to us, as often as we approach it, is repellent anew, next attracts us ever anew, and fills us with admiration and finally forces us into veneration.

It is necessary to state, however, that this blurb does not refer to the Holy Bible, but to the Holy Koran, another of God's masterpieces.

Local papers are not remarkable (as a rule) for a keen sense of humour. We credit the *Streatham News* with a certain deliberate intent to be sarcastic, when it gives a separate paragraph to the following item of local news:—

A chapel is to be erected on the eastern side of St. Michael's Convent, Streatham Common North. Permission is subject to the drainage arrangements being satisfactory.

Perhaps this proviso suggests an ideal which few churches attain. Ancient churches as a rule emit an odour comparable only to the malodorous doctrines which have been taught therein for centuries. It reminds us of Dr. Johnson's correction when somebody said, "You smell, Sir." He retorted, "You mean I stink; it is you who smell."

Fifty Years Ago

SUNDAY, July 14, is the hundredth anniversary of the fall of the Bastille. In itself the capture of that prison-fortress by the people was not a wonderful achievement; it was ill-defended, and its governor might, had he chosen, have exploded the powder magazine and blown it sky-high. But the event was the parting of the ways. It showed that the multitude had got the bit between its teeth, and needed a more potent master than the poor king at Versailles. And the event itself was a striking one. Men are led by imagination, and the Bastille was the symbol of centuries of oppression. Within its gloomy dungeons hundreds of innocent men had perished in solitary misery, without indictment or trial, consigned to death-in-life by the arbitrary order of irresponsible power. Men of the most eminent intellect and character had suffered within its precincts for the crime of teaching new truth or exposing old superstitions. Voltaire himself had twice tasted imprisonment there. What wonder, then, that the people fixed their gaze upon it on that ominous fourteenth of July, and attacked it as the very citadel of tyranny? The Bastille fell, and the sound echoed through Europe. It was the signal of a new era and a new hope. The Revolution had begun—that mighty movement which, in its meaning and consequences, dwarfs every other cataclysm in history.

The Freethinker, July 14, 1889

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THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- J. CLOSE.—Thanks, will use as soon as possible.
- H. JEPSON.—The copy came from one who was out for getting a new reader. It is one of the best methods, although there is inevitably some overlapping. We are glad to hear of the liberal policy of your local library.
- Mr. C. F. BUDGE writes expressing his pleasure at the promised renewal of the series "Things Worth Knowing," and also suggests that a "Cohenism" might now and again be inserted as a "fill-up" at the end of column in place of the usual excerpt from some philosopher. We will give the matter consideration, but there seems to us quite enough of ourself in the paper as it stands.
- K. JONES AND E. COOTE.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for four weeks.

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Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

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Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Sugar Plums

The General Secretary of the N.S.S. will be on vacation from July 21 until August 9, and during that period only matters of pressing importance will be dealt with at the office. It will help if Branch Secretaries and others will forward details requiring attention as soon as possible before the 21st inst.

We are receiving more letters from young men who are joining the army, concerning the conduct of officers who are either ignorant of the legal rights of those "joining up," or bigoted enough to try and over-ride the law. We hope that all Freethinkers joining any of the services will insist upon (1) affirming, instead of taking the oath, and (2) leaving the description given by themselves—Atheist, Agnostic, Freethinker or anything else they please—exactly as they give it. They should decline to sign any document when their wishes are brushed aside. In case of their requests being refused they should write us at once, and we will have the matter taken up with the proper authorities. Army officers have no power whatever to over-ride the wishes of recruits in this respect.

We are indebted to *Reynold's Newspaper* for the following quotation from its issue of seventy-five years ago:—

The House of Commons, after an interesting debate, gave a second reading to the Factory Act Extension

Bill. The measure is a sequel to the recent commission which inquired into the state of the children employed in Leicester watchmaking, the manufacture of percussion caps, paper-staining, pottery, and other trades.

After providing for better conditions for young factory workers, the Bill stipulates that no child under eight years of age shall be employed under any circumstances in the trades specified. In moving the second reading, Mr. H. Bruce stated that between 17,000 and 18,000 children were employed in these trades. Of the 11,000 children working in the potteries, 57 per cent were unable to read or write, and most of them worked from 13 to 14 hours a day. In one process, children were compelled to go in and out of a hot stove into a cold atmosphere, while children who worked as "dippers" were seldom able to continue their occupations owing to paralysis.

One must remember that at this period Evangelistic Christianity was developing very rapidly. "Suffer little children to come unto me"—and at seven years of age we will send them into factories for 14 hours a day.

The Open-Air Debate between the Rural Dean of Kingston and Mr. Ebury as to whether the Christian Religion possessed an adequate historical foundation attracted a large and orderly crowd to Kingston Market Place on Sunday last, a crowd which included an unusually large number of Christians. In spite of the difficulties met with in the shape of leather-lunged political partisans attaching themselves parasitically to the edge of the meeting, the crowd grew, and the debate was carried on enthusiastically to the end. The Rev. Mr. Scrutton almost limited his evidential case to the mere existence of the Christian Church, which to him appeared a sufficiently adequate historical foundation. Mr. Ebury, however, thought otherwise and gave his reasons. It is rarely that the chance occurs of carrying the Freethought position to a religious public, and Mr. Ebury splendidly seized his opportunity with both hands.

The French have been celebrating the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Great Revolution of 1789, and Professor J. B. Firth writes a special article on it in the *Daily Telegraph* for July 8. Professor Firth pays a high compliment to the declaration of the Rights of Man in the drawing up of which there are clear traces of the hand of Thomas Paine. He says the Declaration of the Rights of Man was addressed, not merely to Frenchmen but to the whole of the civilized world. The Declaration he says, correctly enough, is

a noble charter of political and personal liberty. Provision is here made for the liberty of the individual, for the freedom of individual opinion, for the citizen's protection against arbitrary arrest, and for the State's claim, as representing the general will, to the obedience of its members. The law is exalted, the personal liberty of the subject is respected. For the monarch's absolute will there was exchanged the sovereignty of the people. The common people were told that they had been born free and had equal rights. The whole body of the people were henceforth to form the nation; the poor were no longer to be regarded as predestined to toil, to suffer and to fight the battles of an autocrat at his sole bidding. . . . Looking back over the interval of 150 years one may say that, in the main, the Declaration has triumphed.

This is not overstated. The French Revolution marked the birth of modern European democracy, and it has left in France a tradition of the self-respect of the individual that is far stronger in France than it is with us. It would not be easy to find in France, at the distance of a hundred and fifty years, many Frenchmen who would use the term "upper class," in the tone of veneration with which that phrase is still uttered in this country.

Bearing in mind what Professor Firth says, it is regrettable that he should have sullied a fine article with comments on the "lurid story of the Revolution," and that one is "appalled at the brutal and insensate crimes committed in the name of liberty," "to palliate which is an insult to decency." There is no need to palliate the "terror," only to remember what Carlyle said that during the worst period of the "terror," "the French

people suffered less than at any time of their history." But as Carlyle also said, it was the shrieking thousands that suffered, not the dumb millions. They could go on suffering generation after generation, living worse than cattle, subject to the extravagance of king and a nobility that had no bounds to their profligacy and brutality, a nation of twenty-five millions, with no rights whatever, with the peasantry starving in sight of the corn they grew for their masters, with their female children subject to the "right of the first night" (the right of the Seigneur to the wife of the peasant for the first twenty-four hours after marriage) a church owning a third of the land of France, a church and a nobility paying only a "non-collectable tax." All this could go on century after century, and the world was never "appalled at the brutal and insensate crimes" committed in the name of Church, King and aristocracy. And, once more to Carlyle, if there could be one picture worse than even the most fantastical picture of the French Revolution, it would be the existence of a people situated as the French people were, and without the courage to revolt.

But the worst feature of Professor Firth's article is that he fails to point out that the French Revolution of 1789 was an accomplished fact, and accompanied with less bloodshed than has accompanied most revolutions. But it alarmed the aristocracy of England, as the Russian Revolution alarmed the financial and religious governors in our own day. As we spent about one hundred and fifty millions in the attempt to replace the Czar in Russia, so Britain subsidized continental powers and encouraged the emigrant nobility to combine against the French Republic and to return to their old-time allegiance to the poor weak thing that occupied the throne. Do nothing, make excuses, promise everything, was the advice that Burke gave, and millions of British money went to crush the Declaration of the Rights of Man in France. The example was too near our shores, and at all costs a barrier had to be placed between Britain and the application of the Rights of Man. There were Munichs before 1938.

All this Professor Firth leaves unsaid. And the picture of the French Revolution created and assiduously circulated for years still obtains in the minds of those who take their history from cheap romances, or sensational films in which the men and women of the French Revolution are still thought of as so many drunken, dissipated thieves and ruffians. Such slanders die hard, particularly in a country such as ours where not twenty per cent of the people have outgrown their almost fetishistic reverence for an aristocracy. They do not realize that even if all the lurid stories of the Revolution were true the condemnation of the Church and Government of France would be the greater. The principle here involved was well expressed by Mirabeau. If you for generation after generation treat the people as brutes, you must expect them to behave like brutes. With Warren Hastings, when charged with robbing the native rulers of India, one may well marvel at the moderation displayed. One day we shall perhaps learn the lesson—one that is beginning to shape itself in this and other countries—that people do not make revolutions. It is the persistence of rotten institutions, the perpetuation of wrongs that should be removed, the stupidity of Governments, all these things make revolutions—the people only carry them out.

Commencing on Saturday, July 15, Mr. G. Whitehead will speak each evening until Friday, at the Bolton Town Hall Steps, at 7.30, excepting Tuesday evening, when he will speak at Chorley Market, at 8 o'clock. Pioneer Press literature is available at all meetings, and thus saves time and postage for purchasers accepting the opportunity.

If they call the exposure of their imposture "blasphemy," that only shows the strength of their deception, and should increase the efforts to destroy this deception.

Tolstoi.

The "Third" Alternative

WHEN John M. Robertson wrote his two masterpieces, *Pagan Christs*, and *Christianity and Mythology*, Christianity received an even more staggering blow than that given by Cassels' *Supernatural Religion*. In both cases Christian writers and thinkers were faced with works of deep scholarship impossible to ignore and impossible to boycott. As far as those Christians who still thought in primitive terms, like Catholics and Salvationists, were concerned, it was obvious that Cassels and Robertson could make no appeal; but there were still a few scholars in the Christian Church, and they knew that both these authors had made deadly attacks on fundamental Christian positions, and had to be answered. Those of us who have followed the subsequent controversy know how utterly inadequate have been the replies, and even the more intelligent Christians must have seen this, for it is obvious that they had pious hopes that the discussion would die out with the passing of years, and all would be once again bright and cheerful in the rosy garden of Christianity.

But seminal ideas cannot be obliterated in this way, and they have left their mark on a later school of writers and thinkers. The ex-abbé Loisy—perhaps to his regret—has been forced to deal with the non-historicity of Jesus in his many valuable contributions to theology, and has certainly not succeeded in showing any fundamental weakness in Robertson's work. He has, of course, completely given up the idea that Jesus was a God, and he has even given up almost everything that has been written about him except that he lived; if he is now quite so sure of even that, I should be greatly surprised. But one thing he has conclusively shown, and that is, if ever there was a Jesus, he was just an ordinary man made into a God by his more pious and superstitious followers.

On the other hand, another Frenchman, Doctor Couchoud, is equally convinced that Jesus never was anything else in the first place but a God—and therefore a myth—and that a number of writers made up their minds to make him a Man. The issue between them is, "Is the God-man Jesus a man made into a God, or a God made into a man?" This question is still being argued by the *Hibbert Journal*—which deserves our congratulation for allowing the discussion full liberty in its pages. After all, the *Hibbert Journal* is more or less devoted to Christianity, and many of its readers will not particularly like questions which strike at the very root of their religion being discussed so openly and freely.

The Dean of Oriel College, Oxford, is perhaps one of these, for he knows perfectly well what is a primary question as far as his own beliefs are concerned. He knows that even if Couchoud is wrong and Loisy is right, it is equally fatal to Christianity; and so in the latest number of the *Hibbert Journal* he proposes a third alternative. What if both Loisy and Couchoud are wrong? What if after all there really was an "Incarnation," that Jesus really was the Son of the Living God—or God Himself?

Dean Collins takes Couchoud to task for regarding it "as impossible that the conception of the God-man can have originated in any event of history, no matter of what kind," and claims that this is "to prejudge an issue the evidence for which, as a New Testament critic, he is supposed to evaluate." This argument is very naive. One would imagine that the Dean had never seen any work in which the "evidence" he talks about has not been, not merely seriously impugned, but literally put out of court. Does he want us to believe that there is any evidence anywhere for the actual existence of this "God-man" except in the New Testament? And is he really unaware that this

work had been riddled over and over again from the historical point of view? Cassels' classical *Supernatural Religion* proved beyond a doubt, except to the most ignorant fundamentalist, that the "evidence" which the Dean wants Couchoud to examine again was manufactured over 100 years after the events are supposed to have taken place. His contentions in that book have never been seriously controverted.

The Dean is also angry that Couchoud does not take more into consideration the "faith" of Christians, that "he fails to give consideration to the important question whether or not faith is a valid ground of knowledge." This is giving up the whole discussion with a vengeance. If "faith" is brought into it as a "ground of knowledge," there is an end of serious disputation. Seriously to discuss, for example, such a childish belief as the Ascension because the early Christians believed it on faith, followed by the more hopeless of their later brothers on the same grounds, puts the whole question outside of rational investigation.

Couchoud insists that the doctrine of the God-man is "already complete and well-balanced" in the Epistles of Paul, and the Dean retorts that this has been opposed by "competent" critics of the New Testament—which may or may not be true, but which should have been dealt with by the Dean.

But, coming down to serious issues, it is obvious that Mr. Collins prefers dealing with Loisy, as at least the ex-abbé does believe in a Person who existed. Such iconoclasm as that of Dr. Couchoud was better left alone, it might make Christians think more than was good for them. The question then for the Dean was that of Loisy—was he right in contending that Jesus must be regarded as a deified man?

To do this in the way Dean Collins thinks it ought to be done, he suggests that we must come to the New Testament with a "fresh approach." That is, do not trouble what other critics have said about it, do not believe those who approach it as if the books contained therein were purely literary documents and not thoroughly historical ones. "It is reasonable to contend that the corpus of Christian literature is unique," adds Mr. Collins (without giving one scrap of evidence in proof), "and that it can be properly analysed only if it is treated, primarily, from a theological standpoint."

That is the wonderful "third alternative" which the Dean of Oriol College puts forward to combat the very disturbing and heretical theses of Couchoud and Loisy. Please leave it to us—we are theologians, and we are the only ones capable of "properly analysing" the New Testament. This "unique" work, he contends, "clearly reveals that the original Gospel of the early Church proclaimed to man a redemption through the saving acts of God in the historic Incarnation of the Son of God." We are back where the early Christians were with all their credulity, superstition, fear, and ignorance. We are in the grip of the old Fundamentalist who has not, and never will, because he dare not, budge from the narrowest Protestant standpoint. What an alternative indeed!

If ever the bankruptcy of the orthodox case was openly displayed, it is in this article by an Oxford Dean. It would have made that great Freethinker, John M. Robertson, curl up with contempt. But more than ever he would have found in it a justification for his own painstaking and encyclopedic research into Christian origins, and in his own conclusions. And with Robertson, I am sure would be both Loisy and Couchoud. They could only see in this "third alternative," not an answer in any way to their own carefully thought-out positions, but something to laugh at. They would be right.

H. CUTNER

The Primrose Path

Oh! take the cash and let the credit go
Nor heed the rumble of a distant drum.

Omar Khayyam

We think our civilization near its meridian, but we are yet only at the cock-crowing and the morning star.

Emerson

THE clergy believe in humility and self-sacrifice—for other people. Not for themselves; they are a caste apart from their fellow-men. They will cadge money from children, from old-age pensioners; and they will not refuse the widow's mite. When it is their turn, however, to set an example of how to carry a cross, and follow in the footsteps of the alleged founder of their faith, the case is altered. See how the higher ecclesiastics "follow Jesus," who is said to have been so poor that he had not where to lay his head, and died a felon's death. Bishops and Archbishops regard themselves as aristocrats. Their desire is to keep the working people in humble obedience to their "social superiors," and, in a few instances, to patronize them.

There are three hundred bishops in the State-supported Church of England. Many of them possess palaces, town houses, seats in the House of Lords, and they all play the sedulous ape to aristocracy. Even the lesser luminaries, such as the Continental, Colonial, and overseas Bishops enjoy four-figure salaries. The full fancy-dress of these Right-Reverend Fathers-in-God costs about £250 each. Even the suffragan bishops get quite substantial sums yearly. There are other "plums" in the profession. There are fifty churches in the City of London proper, with a small resident population, and the salaries of the parsons average about £1,000 yearly, with a house thrown in. Quite a number of the provincial appointments have excellent salaries attached. Some parsons are pluralists; that is, they hold several appointments at the same time, each bringing in money. In other words, the clergy of this Anglican Church have every reason to believe with Doctor Pangloss that this is the best of all possible worlds. The resources of this Church run into millions of money, and the whole is sheltered under the umbrella of the State, which is, supposedly, a Democratic one.

Even the common rectors and vicars live in houses larger than their neighbours, and draw the comfortable stipends mentioned in Crockford's *Clerical Directory*.

At this season of the year when the annual exodus in search of sunshine is in full swing, one cannot help noticing the number of clergymen of all the numerous denominations among the holiday makers, and in the hotels and boarding-houses. All around the extensive coast line of Great Britain and Ireland, these men-of-God are very much in evidence. And, if one travelled the pleasure-resorts of the Continent, the same thing would be true. These men are not crucified; they much prefer the primrose path to Paradise. And, so far as the pleasure-resorts of the homeland are concerned, they are not averse from mixing a little pious propaganda with their relaxation. May we say "to improve the shining hour"?

Note the number of open-air services, and perceive how these salaried sons-of-God pay particular attention to children's meetings, and also to the distribution of tracts among adults. And what literature! They look like publishers' remainders left over from the early Victorian Era, and are not only pre-Darwinian, but pre-scientific—one might also say pre-historic.

Such tracts are seldom seen in London except in the side-street tin tabernacle and mission tents. And

the addresses to the children are not always the same as they are accustomed to at home.

Ingersoll pointed out, acutely, that when a piece of religious propaganda becomes too stupid and too much out-of-date for ordinary congregations, it is still used by the missionaries and the revivalists. Much the same thing happens with regard to this seaside religious propaganda. Away from the fierce searchlight of criticism, the clergy are so prone to slide back, not only to eighteenth-century modes of thought, but to sheer, unadulterated Mediaevalism. These tracts, and these addresses, raise once more the old question, not only of the alleged spiritual and moral tone of the popular superstition, but also the matter of the conduct of the Christian clergy. These tracts and addresses voice emphatically very different views from those apologetic and invertebrate ideas put forward by artful defenders of the Faith (and their salaries) in their contests with Freethinkers.

In controversy it is the fashion for the champion of Orthodoxy to explain, smilingly, that the "Book of Genesis" supports evolution without any of Darwin's tiresome details. They say that, in attacking the barbarous and disgusting dogma of hell-fire, the "Intellectuals" are but flogging a dead horse: "That quadruped, however, has a Biblical habit of rising from the dead, and that there is plenty of kick left in that ancient animal is demonstrated by the literature issued for the instruction of the unsuspecting young, and by the sermons preached away from the centres of civilization. Remote from observation, the clergy are daily endeavouring to put back the clock of European culture, not for a few years, but for twenty centuries.

Freethinkers who imagine that one of the oldest and most horrific religious dogmas is losing its hold on the national mind because the clergy seem, hypocritically, to be giving the old savage ideas but faint support in their public utterances will do well to remember that, behind the scenes, the objectionable dogmas are still taught throughout the Christian world. The Salvation Army, and some of the smaller sects of Nonconformity, which cater for the least educated members of the community, are still faithful to the old savage formula, "Blood and Fire." It is worthy of the followers of an old-world creed, who, outraging the spirit of the twentieth century, pray for rain and fine weather, christen battleships, bless regimental flags, and, until fairly recent times, had a lengthy service in their official Prayer Book in praise of "King Charles the Martyr." Their point of view may be estimated by the wording of the dedication of the official Prayer Book, to James the First, in which that padded and half-forgotten buffoon is referred to in language which would be considered excessive if applied to the wisest and greatest of the human race.

Such crude propaganda as is prevalent in the outer fringes of Orthodoxy is so entirely out of step with present-day ideas that it is positively harmful. It is Christianity stripped of its veneer, and showing what an ugly thing it is in reality. In the large towns the astute clergy gloss these barbarities. They omit awkward verses in church, and they no longer preach sermons on hell-fire and damnation. They bill and coo messages of love and brotherhood, and take the cash. But the difference still exists, for Orthodoxy is rooted in ancient barbarism. That difference is so pronounced, and has now got to such a point, that Church and State must part company if Britain is to be still considered a really civilized nation. But the Church must not be allowed to retain untold millions of money in order to continue her mischievous activity of leading this country back to Chaos and Old Night.

How small, mean, and contemptible such a creed as Christianity appears, after all is said, in comparison with the Buddhist Sacred Books. Were Gotama to reappear upon the earth and see great nations, pretending to civilization, and yet believing in hell, devils, and eternal torture, he would wonder what blight had fallen upon the human intellect after the lapse of five and twenty centuries. Hear what the wise, old Pagan said, as rendered by Edwin Arnold in *The Light of Asia* :—

Pray not! the darkness will not brighten! Ask
Nought from the silence, for it cannot speak!
Vex not your mournful minds with pious pains!
Ah! brothers, sisters, seek
Nought from the helpless gods by gift and hymn,
Nor bribe with blood, nor feed with fruits and cakes;
Within yourselves deliverance must be sought,
Each man his prison makes.

It is one of the masterstrokes of Priestcraft that the founder of Buddhism, who was an Atheist and denied the gods, was fraudulently transformed into one. The simplest of doctrines were fanned into a puerile superstition. Was not the same process repeated in the case of the Christian Religion? The legendary Christ was a rebel against authority. The Christian Church is one of the largest and wealthiest vested interests in the world.

MIMNERMUS

"The Dean at his Best *"

Up to a time well within the nineteenth century, the Bible was almost universally accepted by Christians as the inspired Word of God. By high and low, educated and uneducated alike, its sacred inerrancy from Genesis to Revelation was regarded as beyond question or dispute. So eminent a statesman and scholar as W. E. Gladstone could describe it with characteristic exuberance of phrase as "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture," and assert that "the weapon of offence which shall impair its efficiency for aiding in the redemption of mankind has not yet been forged." Even as he was writing, Science had already fabricated weapons which were to lay the "Rock" in ruins. What would this enthusiastic advocate of Scripture verity have thought had he known that foremost among those who were to take advantage of these scientific weapons to assail the "Rock" would be found not a few who were professionally pledged and paid to defend it?

During the last few decades there have arisen within the very bosom of the Church certain persons who, having imbibed a large dose of science as a corrective to their theology, conceive themselves duly qualified to "reconcile the ways of God to man" by a judicious correction of some of the Almighty's little blunders. One or two of them holding, or having held high office in the Lord's household as "chief butlers" and "head bakers," are decidedly of opinion that Christianity has, from its beginning, been fundamentally misunderstood by Christians. In numerous sermons and addresses, and not a few books, these "sage grave men" have given us to understand that in the light of modern scientific teaching, they can no longer accept as "God's Truth" a great deal that has hitherto passed for such.

Chief among those points of Christian belief which the acute, scientific and philosophic discernment of

* Remark of the publisher's reader quoted by the Bishop of London in his introduction to *The Gate of Life*, by W. R. Inge.

these gentlemen leads them to reject are—to begin at the beginning—the Creation, the story of the Fall with its sequel, the Atonement, the Virgin Birth, Christ's Messiahship. His Miracles and the Devil—a fairly comprehensive list, every item of which is, according to time-honoured Christian theology, an indispensable article of faith. How much of his religion remains after this eviscerating process is a question which might stagger the simple and unscientific Christian; but it appears he has no cause to be alarmed, or to jump to the conclusion that the foundations of his Faith are being sapped. These ingenious gentlemen profess to have found ways and means by which they may still be Christians without being cumbered with scientifically exploded beliefs. In fact, some of them afford personal testimony by their own qualifications, that a man may, with perfect comfort to himself, be a D.D. and a D.Sc. In his book, *Should such a Faith Offend*, Bishop Barnes tells us: "If we discover that old Christian beliefs which did not come from Christ are erroneous, let us not be troubled. . . . Views of ancient Jews or of apostles we can abandon when we discover that they were wrong. . . . Christianity does not consist in the scientific value of Genesis or even of belief in the infallibility of St. Paul." Then we have Dr. Inge, a former principal domestic in the menage of the Lord, and an "outspoken" example of this modern type of Christian. This gentleman's religious beliefs are somewhat of a puzzle. He professes to be a Christian Mystic, and to depend for guidance on the "spiritual inner light" in preference to Gospel inspiration. But though he has written a great deal about religion, including a "Confessio Fidei," his Christianity is so wrapped up in his mysticism that it is difficult to say with any degree of precision in what it consists. He is, it appears, an enthusiastic disciple of Plotinus, an Alexandrian neoplatonist of the third century—a sort of *Magister Mysteriorum*, or master of the art of obfuscation, who, whatever his theistic conceptions might have been, was certainly not a Christian.

It is not my purpose to attempt to follow Dr. Inge in his recondite speculations concerning "the ultimate and eternal values, Truth, Beauty and Goodness," or the possibility of attaining to the culminating point of mystical perfection, the "Beatific Vision." Whether Truth, Beauty and Goodness can have either meaning or value apart from human consciousness is a question of little importance, seeing that it is only their existence *here and now* that matters to us. As for the grand object of all mystical endeavour—"union with the superessential One." Dr. Inge admits that he has never had that "rich experience," and seems to deplore the fact. If all we know of the Universe exists for no higher purpose than to afford certain choice spirits an opportunity to dissolve for a few moments in a sort of ecstatic melting-pot, he has reason for his regret. Some of us think that human life has other ends and richer experiences.

But though somewhat misty with regard to his beliefs, Dr. Inge is clear enough with respect to what he doesn't believe, and that is, after all, the main point. In religion it is usually not so much what one believes as what one doesn't believe that matters. Dr. Inge does not accept the Bible as the product of Divine inspiration—at least, not without considerable elimination, and a due regard to the proper method of interpreting the remainder. His nice critical sense revolts at the crudities which the coarse appetite of the majority of his Christian brethren bolts without discrimination.

In the course of a series of addresses, published under the title *The Gate of Life*, he says (Chap. 8): "The descent into Hades; the resuscitation of the

material body of the Crucified and its transportation to the heavenly places where God dwells; the return through the clouds; the ascent of the souls of men reunited with their bodies; the subterranean dungeons of the wicked; the spirits, good and bad, who flit about in the upper regions of the air—all this fell into its place in the pre-Copernican universe, and was believed in as scientific fact. By no ingenuity can all of it be fitted into the framework of the universe, as for nearly four hundred years we have known it to be. . . . The scientific doctrine which destroyed the traditional cosmology has long been an undisputed fact; but the necessary re-adjustment of beliefs is not taken in hand, because the Church is ruled by half-educated Christians, and by ecclesiastics who feel their pulse."

That the discoveries of science have shown that such beliefs can no longer be rationally accepted is a fact which must be recorded not on the profit, but on the loss side of the Christian account. As an institution, Christianity is all the poorer for their discredit. And, though Dr. Inge does not seem to be aware of it, he has personally every reason to be grateful that so many still persist. Has it never occurred to him to consider how much he is indebted to the Church's being ruled by these half-educated Christians and accommodating ecclesiastics, and to their neglect of the necessary readjustment of beliefs, for his deanery of St. Paul's, and the emoluments thereunto attached? He is partial to nice perquisitions. Would this be too nice a question to consider? It has "likelihood to lead it."

In his second address, "The Kingdom of God," Dr. Inge gives us a sample of the method by which the readjustment of Christian beliefs may be effected. Dealing with the question of Christ's Messiahship, he says, "Our Lord is recorded in the Gospels to have made predictions which certainly have not been and cannot now be fulfilled." This is placing the "half-educated Christian" in an awkward dilemma; either the Gospel statements are not true, or "Our Lord" did not know what He was talking about. Dr. Inge admits the difficulty, but thinks it may be successfully met by considering it from "the psychological side," and in about six pages succeeds in showing what was already sufficiently obvious, and which might have been adequately stated in six lines, viz., that the disciples in believing Christ's assurances of His shortly to be expected re-appearance on the clouds of Heaven, were badly "let down." But this is not all—the readjustment of this belief is not quite complete. He goes as far as to say that Jesus Himself may not have been free from the same and other delusions. "I do not wish," he tells us, "to exclude the possibility that our Lord, in becoming man, may have been willing to share to some extent the current popular illusions, both with regard to the Messianic hope, and demoniacal possession." That is to say, he thinks it quite possible that "our Lord" may have been willing to feign a belief in what He knew to be false in order to deceive others. I can put no other construction on his words; because even though Jesus took upon Himself the limitations of human nature, He must have known before He changed His divinity what the truth was. According to this readjustment Christians are to believe, or at least allow it to be possible, that God did not only lend Himself to the perpetration of a supposititious fraud, but that He did not scruple to confirm by His own acts ignorant people in their delusions about the Devil.

In his fifth address, "An Uncharted Journey," we have the following: "My view on the present and future of Christianity is not unlike that of Rudolf Eucken, whose conclusion, in his book called, *Can we Still be Christians?* is, 'We not only can but must be

Christians; only, however, on the one condition that Christianity be recognized as a progressive historical movement, still in the making.' " And he adds, " In holding this view of revelation as a progressive spiritual enlightenment we are not false to the history of Christianity." It would appear that in Dr. Inge's view Christianity has always needed, and always will need to be periodically overhauled, corrected and readjusted in order to bring it up to the successive requirements of our progress in knowledge :—

As if religion were intended
For nothing else but to be mended.

It may have satisfied those to whom it was first offered, because they were incapable of detecting its blunders; but with the advance of time and knowledge, extensive alterations necessitating the elimination of all mistakes, contradictions and absurdities have become indispensable before it can satisfy the critical taste of Dr. Inge and other conditional Christians. But in repudiating the authority of Scripture in favour of the "inner light," he is merely changing the *name*, not the *thing*. If there be no warrant for the truth of scripture inspiration, what warrant is there for the truth of his "progressive spiritual enlightenment"? They are both of a piece; the one is just as trustworthy as the other.

The great difficulty in dealing with Dr. Inge's religious views is to understand by what process of reasoning he manages to reconcile what he believes with what he doesn't believe. He appears to be gifted with an occult power of harmonizing contradictions beyond the scope of ordinary persons. We can understand the man who says, "I am a Christian because I believe the Scriptures to be 'God's Truth,'" and we can also understand the man who says, "I am not a Christian because I regard the Bible as a medley of myth, tradition and imposture," for these two positions are severally consistent in themselves. But we cannot understand the man who, while professing his belief in Christ as his "Blessed Lord" and "Divine Master," invalidates or destroys the only evidence by which his belief might be justified; and who, while declaring that "There is not the slightest tendency, among those who think as I do, to question the divine authority of Jesus Christ, or to build on any other foundation than that which was laid in the Gospels and Epistles," has done not a little in this book to reduce the "divine authority of Jesus Christ" to a nullity, and the Gospels to a farrago of forged and scientifically discredited tales. This is where Dr. Inge makes us feel the great advantage he enjoys in being a "Christian mystic."

A. YATES

Obituary

MR. H. BLACK

WE regret to hear of the death of Mr. H. Black, of Manchester. He was for years an energetic worker in the Freethought movement in Manchester and did good work. He was the first Secretary of the New Manchester Branch and when he resigned left the Branch one of the strongest in the country, and with a bank balance, which if not very large, was at least well on the right side. Mr. Black has been for some years in indifferent health. He died on July 9, aged 62. We received this news only in time to record the death of an old friend and a sturdy Freethinker. A further notice may appear next week.

C.C.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LONDON

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near Bandstand) : 6.30, Mr. P. Goldman.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place) : 7.30, Mr. T. H. Elstob.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead) : 11.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. 3.30, Parliament Hill Fields, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, Mr. L. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Friday, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH (Brockwell Park) : 7.30, Sunday, Mr. F. A. Ridley. Rushcroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, A Lecture. Liverpool Grove, Walworth Road, 8.0, Friday, A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 8.0, Wednesday, Mrs. Buxton and Mr. Carpenter. 8.0, Thursday, Mr. Saphin. 8.0, Friday, Mr. Barnes. 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Collins. 7.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes, Tuson, Wood and Mrs. Buxton.

COUNTRY

INDOOR

NEWCASTLE (New Church Hall, Park Road) : 7.30, Wednesday. Debate—"Is Christianity Reasonable?" *Affir.*: Rev. E. R. Goldsack. *Neg.*: Mr. J. T. Brighton. Chairman: Dr. Staniland.

OUTDOOR

ACCRINGTON MARKET : 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Haymarket) : 8.0, Saturday, Mr. D. Robinson. Catherine Street, Grange Road, 8.0, Wednesday, Mr. D. Robinson.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH. A Picnic to Thurston, on Sunday, July 16. Meet at Woodside Ferry Approach at 1.0 p.m. Liverpool members and friends book through return to Liverpool.

BLYTH (The Fountain) : 7.0, Monday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BOLTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Hall Steps) : 7.30, Saturday, July 15 and following week, except Tuesday. Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture each evening.

CHORLEY MARKET : 7.30, Tuesday, Mr. G. Whitehead.

COLNE : 7.30, Tuesday, Mr. J. Clayton.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound) : 7.0, Mrs. Muriel Whitefield (Glasgow)—"More Determinism."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Albion Street) : 8.0, Sunday, Mr. T. L. Smith. Tuesday, 8.0, Albert Road. Thursday, 8.0, Minard Road. Friday, 8.0, Rose Street, Sauchiehall Street. Muriel Whitefield will speak at these meetings.

MANCHESTER BRANCH (Bury Market) : 8.0, Saturday. Stevenson Square, 7.0, Sunday. Wigan Market, 8.0, Monday. Preston Market, 8.0, Wednesday. Mr. W. A. Atkinson will address these meetings.

MIDDLESBROUGH (Davison Street) : 7.15, Thursday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market) : 7.30, Sunday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View) : 7.0, Tuesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SCOUTBTOTM (Rossendale) : 7.45, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Gill Bridge Avenue) : 7.0, Mr. J. Walton (Fence Houses)—"Religion—Rates—Ramp."

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Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords in *re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society Limited*, in 1917, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

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